

AUGUST — SEPTEMBER, 1965

[Because of restrictions on space, it has been found necessary to defer publication of several Convention addresses at the Convention until the next issue of Rural Life. They include those by Mr. Ulrich Ellis (Director of the New England New State Campaign), Rev. Father Gallagher, Rev. Father Markey, Rev. Father Duck and Mr. M. J. Howley. — Editor.]



THE NATIONAL CONVENTION IN ALBURY



Addresses and Reports

RURAL LIFE

ORGAN OF THE NATIONAL
CATHOLIC RURAL MOVEMENT

An Australian bi-monthly devoted to the building of the Australian way of life on a rural foundation. An Australian bi-monthly which believes that this end can be achieved only by the rebuilding of rural communities on a basis of positive, active and dynamic Christianity. An Australian bi-monthly determined to fight every attempt to disrupt the rural way of living.

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AUGUST — SEPTEMBER, 1965

"To Restore Christ to the Countryside . . . and the Countryside to Christ."

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The Episcopal Chairman Welcomes Delegates



*MOST REV. F. A. HENSCHKE, D.D.,
Bishop of Wagga Wagga.*

A welcome to delegates by the N.C.R.M. Episcopal Chairman, Most Rev. F. A. Henschke, D.D., Bishop of Wagga, opened proceedings at the National Convention in Albury on July 20.

"Because there are some new people here today, I will speak of the aims and ideals of the National Catholic Rural Movement since its foundation," Bishop Henschke said.

"It is, as you know, a spiritual movement. We realised at the time of the Rural Movement's foundation that the land is the ideal place to raise a family; but the position in the rural areas was so desperate that numbers of people were leaving the land, and those who remained on it were deprived of many of the amenities they should have had, and to which they were entitled.

"But though our aim was to improve the material position of the people on the land, that was only a means to an end. The real end was as our motto is: 'To restore Christ to the Countryside, and the Countryside to Christ'.

"The idea was to retain people on the land so as to preserve the families in circumstances where they would have the opportunity of practising their religion; and, better still, that by their example, they would lead other people to do the same; for we knew that to achieve our aims, everyday life must become not only Christian, but Catholic.

"In order to do that, then, we had our Groups which opened their meetings with the Rosary before they began their discussions.

"We also had our practical side, and there were two aims to that.

"One was to give our members the opportunity of practising Christian charity by helping others who were less favoured than themselves; the other was by helping our neighbours — particularly our non-Catholic neighbours — and thus get them interested in the Church, too.

"And so, at our Group meetings, we tried to train our members to take their part in the various organisations for the man on the land. This was not to set up rival movements to those already existing, but we knew we must have in those movements men imbued with Christian ideals who would keep these movements Christian.

"At that time Communism, as you know, was a very urgent question; so our idea was to have men who would counter Communism by bringing Christian ideals into their various activities in public life.

"These things kept our organisation Christian and practical.

"The idea of practical charity grew later on to the question of how we could give help to the people of Asia. The aim was to give our members something to do, not only to keep them interested, but also that the Rural Movement should be a charitable one working along practical lines.

"I want to emphasise to you now that we must try to get back to the original aims of the National Catholic Rural Movement; I want to impress upon the new Groups particularly that the whole basis of the National Catholic Rural Movement is spiritual.

"The other thing I must say is that the Rural Movement is taking on a new life where the organisers are working.

"It is quite definite now that we are going to get nowhere unless we have organisers who can visit the groups — permanent groups — from time to time, and thus keep in contact with them.

"Of course, the disadvantage of this is that these organisers have to be paid, and we cannot pay them unless we get more members.

"This is rather a vicious circle, but as time goes on and our membership increases we will be able to put on more and more organisers, and thus be able to extend further.

"Only recently, one of the Bishops in Queensland, who is very interested in the work of the N.C.R.M., asked some of us to go to Rockhampton to explain to the priests and people there what the aims and ideals of the N.C.R.M. are.

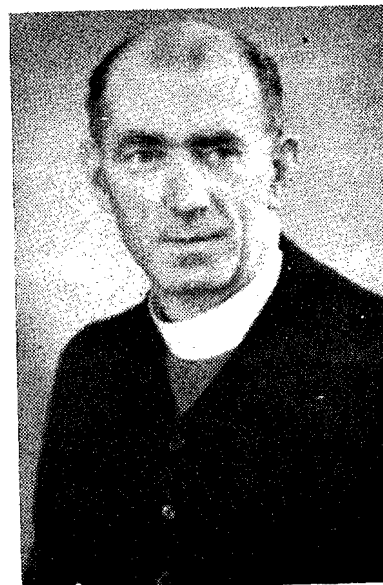
"Please God, we will start a group up there and spread the Rural Movement in the Diocese.

"I again thank those of you who have come along to the Convention, from which I expect a lot of good will result. God bless you."

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THE CHURCH, THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH

*(Spiritual Talk at N.C.R.M. Convention by
Rt. Rev. Mgr. J. H. LARKINS.)*

We are members of the Church, of the Kingdom of God on earth; and in recent times we have begun to feel that we are much more important than we thought we were.

Those of us who learned Christian doctrine at school learned that the Church was the "congregation of all the pastors and faithful under one Visible Head appointed by Christ."

That is still true today.

It was a description of the Church that had been existing for 400 years in a sort of embattled state, with a world of Protestantism and atheism about it.

We were looking at the visible structure of the Church and the kind of extensive organisation it had.

During the 19th Century, Cardinal Newman wrote a book on the development of doctrine in the Church. In it he pointed out (and other advanced thinkers have done the same) how the Church, in the course of the centuries, had thought about the deposit of faith we have, and how the people generally were always facing new difficulties, new problems and new situations.

This almost forced the Church to think hard and develop a greater understanding of the things that are the basis of our Catholic faith.

Now we have the Vatican Council — the first Council for 400 years — setting out about completing the work.

Much thinking has been done in the meantime, in our century and our generation also, particularly about the Church and its place in the world.

In its thinking about the Constitution of the Church, the Vatican Council has been concerned quite a lot with what is going on in the minds of the people themselves in the search for greater understanding of the Church and of the mission of the Church in the world.

Plan for our salvation

The Vatican Council in its Constitution tells us it sees it this way: Instead of looking so much at what is visible of the Church (that is, the structural organisation) it looks at the mystery of the Church and the plan of God for the salvation of men.

The Constitution says that "the Eternal Father, by a free and hidden plan and of His own wisdom and goodness created the world.

"His plan was to raise men to a participation in the Divine Life."

It is a tremendous thing, this, to raise men to be sharers in the very nature of God.

After the catastrophe of the fall of Adam, God still persevered with His people upon the earth.

He could not leave men to themselves; He ceaselessly offered help for their salvation in view of Christ the Redeemer.

The expectation of the Redeemer to come was the sustaining thought for the people of the Old Testament through the many thousands of years before the coming of Christ.

The Council tells us that "from the beginning of the world, the foreshadowing of the Church took place. It was prepared in a remarkable way throughout the history of the people of Israel and by means of the Old Covenant.

"In the present era of time, the Church was constituted and, by the outpouring of the Spirit, made manifest. At the end of time it will gloriously achieve completion when all the just will be gathered together with the Father in the Universal Church."

Preparing His people

Right from the beginning of the world, the Church — God's plan — was foreshadowed; and step by step He prepared His people.

He brought Abraham from his home country of Ur of the Chaldees to the land that was afterwards to be the Holy Land, the land of Christ, and He made a Covenant with Abraham, who was to be the father of a great people.

In the course of time, with the coming of Christ, the Church — the Kingdom of God on earth — was actually established.

This is a Church which, as the Council tells us, will in the end achieve its perfection with complete union with God the Father.

That is the picture of the Church that we must look at. It is a Church that comes from the eternal throne of God to embrace the human race, so that ALL will be saved and will be sharers in the Divine Nature of God.

The plan was that, even after the fall of Adam, God would still lead His people.

Those who have thoroughly studied the Scripture and the Old Testament can see there the hand of God guiding His chosen people, even through wickedness and what looked like a foolish series of conflicts.

In glory and goodness, in punishment and degradation, until finally they were a conquered race, the hand of God was guiding them and preparing them.

Even though, in the end, they proved a stubborn, proud and stiff-necked people, there was a process of conditioning to prepare them for the time when God the Son was to come into the world.

Whatever revelation of God was given in the Old Testament times seems dim and dark to us; but the great manifestation of God in the world was His actual coming into the world with our human nature — God the Son taking our human form, living our life amongst us and teaching as no man ever taught before.

His primary purpose in coming into the world was to suffer and die for our salvation, to lift us from the state into which we had fallen because of the sins of our First Parents, to regenerate us and make us participators in the Divine Nature of God.

Sustained in the Church

So, we are sustained in the Church as members of God's Kingdom on earth; we are reborn at Baptism; we are lifted to a higher life, and the process is continued through all that the Church has given us, particularly the Holy Eucharist.

Thus we go through life, and thus we are prepared.

The Council wants to impress upon us God's plan of salvation as indicated in the Old Testament, and so down into the New Testament.

The plan is not that we are just individual members, each one struggling alone to try to conform to God's plan and achieve our salvation; rather is God seeking to save people as a whole.

In Old Testament times He took apart from the others one section of the people. Abraham was taken out of his country and brought into the new land that God showed him, and He promised him he would be the father of a great people.

Later, this Covenant between God and Abraham was strengthened when God gave Moses the Commandments.

These people were what we would call "the holy people of God"; now we are apart as a people; we are to be the holy people, the sons of God.

Sometimes people wonder how we can be sons of God; but every day when we read the opening words of the Gospel of St. John in the Mass we are told how the Eternal Son of God came into this world. He is the Son of God Himself, and to those who received Him He gave the power to be sons of God.

So, there is nothing new in this idea of being sons of God, or God's holy people, or being members of the Kingdom of God on earth.

In our New Testament times, and particularly in our times with changes in the Liturgy, people sometimes become confused.

Participation in the Mass

But, here again, we find that God wants us to worship with other people; participation in the Mass does give us the idea that we are a people — God's holy people — come before Him to offer Him worship and to receive the grace of God we need for strengthening our sanctity here on earth and preparing us for the eternity of Heaven.

All this gives us a greater idea of ourselves and our mission in the world.

You remember that St. Peter the Apostle, in his Epistle to the people of his time, reminded them: "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people."

Indeed, we are a chosen generation. God has chosen us, because, as members of the Church, we have been prepared to receive Christ the Redeemer, and accept what God provides for us here on earth.

We are a kingly priesthood, and we become more conscious of that with the changes in the Mass allowing the people greater participation in what is going on.

We realise that we are sharing in the priesthood of Christ. The celebrant is the ministerial priest, but the people also have their part in the Mass, and by the reception of the Sacraments and in the making known of the faith all around them.

Purchased by Christ

As St. Peter said: "We are a purchased people..." "We are a purchased people because we have been redeemed; we have been brought back; we have been purchased by Christ. We belong to Him, and in the process we are made brothers of Christ, sons of God and heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the world in which we live today we must try to live up to that standard. We are members of the Church by the very fact that we are baptised in Christ and confirmed, and so strengthened in our faith and our holy religion.

In the Kingdom of God on earth we must try to extend that holiness in the world in which we live.

That always will be a difficult task, but it is a challenge to all of us to make the world Christian, to make it Christlike, to bring it to Christ.

It is a challenge to do our part in all our daily work, in our own families, in the local community in which we live, and in our whole nation.

We must bring to all we do Christian standards and Christian ideals that will be a driving force in the community, so that we may live up to the motto we proclaim: **TO BRING CHRIST TO THE COUNTRYSIDE, AND THE COUNTRYSIDE TO CHRIST.**

Towards the end of the Document of the Church, the Council has this to say:

"The lay apostolate (which is our vocation) is a participation, a sharing in the salvific mission of the Church itself. Through their Baptism and Confirmation are all commissioned to that Apostolate by Our Lord himself. By the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, that Church which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. The laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth."

Then the Constitution goes on to say: "Each individual layman must stand before the world as a witness to the Resurrection and Life of the Lord Jesus and a symbol of the Living God. All the laity as a community, and each one according to his ability, must nourish the world with the fruit of the Spirit."

This, then, is the task and the glorious opportunity of National Catholic Rural Movement members in implementing their motto and restoring Christ to the Countryside, and the Countryside to Christ."

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THE N.C.R.M.:

Its History And Achievements

By FRANK CLANCEY

Frank Clancey, who gave this talk at the Convention, had long and practical experience of the N.C.R.M. For some years, he was National Organiser, and in that capacity he did much of permanent value in the work of the Rural Apostolate.

For several years before the Rural Movement began in 1939, and for several years after, there was a great deal of discussion and debate on the form of Catholic Action most appropriate to the farming community.

I say "farming community" because, in the early days of the Rural Movement, it tended to be an organisation exclusively of farmers, with very few townspeople active in it.

The debate on the form of Catholic Action was not surprising because there were few suitable counterparts to the Rural Movement throughout the world; we had no blueprint on which to model ourselves, particularly taking into account the prevailing situation in Australia.

Before the Rural Movement began there was an enormous drift from the country to the city — for reasons very clear to the founders of the Rural Movement.

Farming was financially unrewarding and held no attractions for young people, and in country towns life, too, was unattractive.

Again, at the outbreak of the war in 1939, many sons of the soil left the land to fight for national survival, and many did not return. Some gave their lives to the nation, others found city life more to their liking on their return.

Revitalising rural life

In the 1940s Rural Movement members made heroic efforts to revitalise rural life at a time when there was no force, either economic or social, working for it. Yet, despite all difficulties, the Rural Movement properly established itself at this time.

A great deal of time was spent in policy development because the organisation was starting from scratch and enormous problems faced the nation and the rural community itself.

The time spent on policy development was of great value because it gave the N.C.R.M. both direction and vigour; and, in consequence, we have an organisation with realism and a practical pattern of policy.

The highlight of the N.C.R.M. in the war years appears to me to have been the lead it gave in the establishment of War Agricultural Organisation committees.

The idea — to mobilise and use to the best advantage for the service of the nation manpower and things in short supply — was an idea made practical by the Rural Movement and later adopted by the Federal Government.

The development and practical implementation of co-operatives, particularly credit unions, was another highlight.

Most of the farmers were in debt and credit for them was extremely difficult; and there was no legislation in any State except New South Wales to deal with co-operatives.

In the 30s, 40% of the wheatgrowers were bankrupt; and when Australia entered the war, their economic situation was unchanged. It was at this time that a farm was defined as "a piece of land surrounded by mortgages".

The Rural Movement began to fill, to some extent, the need for credit by establishing credit unions; and, in a short time, 100 credit unions were established in the country areas of Victoria, as well as others in Northern N.S.W. and Queensland.

In later years, the work of the Rural Movement resulted in the passing and operation of the Victorian Co-operative Act; the same can be said for the Australian Capital Territory ordinance, which was, in fact, written by an N.C.R.M. member.

Pioneering of co-operatives

So it is true to say that in those days towards the end of the war, the Rural Movement pioneered co-operatives throughout Australia.

At the same time, we saw the development of the independent and diversified farm — an idea which had been enunciated before, but which this organisation developed further.

We saw, too, the development of economic theories of international trade with priorities for primary industries.

It was at this time that Colin Clark came to Australia and wedded his ideas to those of the Rural Movement to hammer out economic policy. Together they joined battle with many Australian economists on the direction of our national economy.

We said that emphasis should be on the primary exports industry; the opposing economists said that secondary industry should get priority.

Our opinion was soundly based; for, with the end of the war, world markets for primary produce were increasing; and, besides, the Marshall Plan, introduced into Western Europe, lifted the economy of that area and provided markets for Australia's primary produce.

While all of this was going on, many of our Groups were undertaking projects of social charity, one of these being the agistment of stock from the Mallee and the Wimmera.

Migration was just beginning in 1947, and the Rural Movement was among the strongest supporters of the scheme.

We knew that there were many thousands of homeless and destitute people, without hope of any future, in displaced persons' camps in Western Europe. These people were beginning to come to Australia, and we urged that they be taken and welcomed.

At this time, also, organised land settlement on a large scale was discussed — at the Ballarat Convention about 1946. It had been discussed previously, but the Rural Movement was looking for organised land settlement at the time.

Aside from such activities, there were also local and limited group activities — prevention of distribution of indecent literature, helping men or families on farms when the breadwinner was incapacitated by bad health, etc.

Emphasis on the spiritual

In all this time — as has been the case throughout the N.C.R.M.'s history — there was an emphasis on the spiritual. The Rural Movement introduced in many areas the "Blessing of Crops" and "Camp Retreats".

This is the mark of the N.C.R.M. Always there has been strong emphasis on the link between the natural and the supernatural. The Rural Movement holds that you must build up the natural order to have a satisfactory supernatural order in things.

By 1947 the membership of the Rural Movement was widespread, particularly in the Eastern States; and at the Bathurst Convention in that year the representation was Australia-wide.

At that time, in the Diocese of Rockhampton (which was mentioned earlier as again showing interest in the N.C.R.M.) there were 14 groups; in the Colac parish in Victoria's Western District there were eight groups.

The Rural Movement also interested itself in the activities of women, and Mary Smith was an organiser; about this time, too, Ben Gaskin was sent to Queensland — he mentioned to me only the other day that he was able to enrol 500 members there.

In the late '40s there was some temporary halt in the drift to the cities because textile industries were being established in country towns to soak up the surplus labour there. In the main, they were only small industries, and later closed. This halting of the drift was only temporary, and the problem remained.

In the 1948-49 era, we saw the expression of policies previously formulated by our organisation. Programmes for the wool, wheat and dairy industries were needed, and were, in fact, supplied by the Rural Movement.

Regional development

The Premiers' Conference in 1946 or 1947 culminated in the establishment of approximately 45 Regional Committees throughout Australia, designed to study the resources of their particular areas, with a view to developing the region.

The findings of these committees were published in 1949; they touched off renewed interest in regional — especially river valley — development schemes.

We saw the establishment of development schemes in the Hunter, Fitzroy, Murray and King Valleys; and in the King Valley, particularly, we saw the Rural Movement extremely active.

Together with this, there were campaigns for the extension of electricity, phones, roads and so on. The Mangoplah Group was able, I think, to record a success in this direction, and the area owes to the Rural Movement the electric power there now.

In these years, there was, too, our emphasis on the home as the centre of family life. It was not unusual for a Rural Movement organiser to go to a farm home and be greeted by the housewife with: "I'm very pleased to see you. It's only since the Rural Movement has been in existence here that we've been able to get the facilities lacking in the past."

Again, the Rural Movement was paying more attention to Shire Councils and Progress Associations, the reason for this being that the individual Rural Movement member, or even a whole group, was unable to carry out many of the regional development policies — which were also Rural Movement policies.

It was necessary, therefore, for Rural Movement members to get into larger organisations, and to activate them in the desired direction.

In 1949, the Rural Movement, continuing its policy of interest in international affairs, and the needs of underdeveloped countries, urged aid for these countries, including gifts of wheat.

This particular policy was submitted by the N.C.R.M. 16 years ago; only this year has it been implemented, but it was one of the policies of the N.C.R.M.

Concerned with Asia

In the international field as early as 1948, the Rural Movement rightly concerned itself with the future of Australia in Asia. At that time, we saw "colonialism" there coming to an end creating a political vacuum; the N.C.R.M. held the concept that, in this changing world, Australia would have dangerous days ahead if it did not heed and act on what was happening.

So the Rural Movement constantly informed a reluctant and apathetic public of the dangers we were in; it was one of the few organisations with a real awareness of the problem.

In 1949, we saw the fall of Chiang Kai-shek and the rise of Mao and Communist China. Again, there was an intensified threat to Australia's national independence; again the Rural Movement adapted its own policies to the situation and worked to inform public opinion.

One of these policies was migration. By 1948, the post-war migration programme was well under way; the Rural Movement saw its advantages and helped migrants to be settled wherever possible.

Our attitude to the migrant programme was that these people needed somewhere to live. Australia needed these people and they needed us.

As a result of this, many people were settled in rural areas. Fish Creek area in Gippsland is one example — there, 30 families were settled by the Group; another is the Western District of Victoria — in the Koroit and Port Fairy parishes where more than 300 migrants were settled; a third example is around Dimboola in the Wimmera, where many found a new and better life.

A great deal of personal sacrifice was made by Rural Movement members in helping these people less fortunate than themselves; and we were also able to create a more favourable attitude to migration.

There were constant attacks made on Australia's migration programme until the mid-50s. These attacks had a religious and racial bias; the N.C.R.M. constantly pushed the case for migration, and weathered the storm during those years.

At the 1950 Convention, the emphasis was on decentralisation and new States. Ben Gaskin was one of our organisers at that time. A few years later, he moved to the New England New State Movement, and has done tremendous work there since.

In the early 50s, the emphasis was on organised land settlement, and as the Government was slow to act, the N.C.R.M. itself acted.

Maryknoll established

We saw Father Pooley pioneering this field in the establishment of the self-contained rural community at Maryknoll in Victoria. By 1956, this settlement had its own church, school, post office and industries, and was flourishing.

It is an example to the Rural Movement of what a person can do when he is dedicated and knows where he is going.

The Victorian Co-operative Act, which was almost exclusively the work of the Rural Movement, was introduced in 1952, and as a result credit unions again flourished.

They also flourished in N.S.W., two being established at Canberra, and one each at Crookwell, Armidale and Yass. At Yass, in the second year of operation, £18,000 was loaned to people in the area.

Housing Co-operatives were coming into prominence by 1956, and the Rural Movement was again a leader in this field with the establishment of such co-operatives at Leongatha, Tatura and here in Albury. In 1956, the

capital controlled by these co-operatives exceeded £1,000,000; it now exceeds £2,000,000.

Turning back to 1954, the N.C.R.M. began negotiations with the Australian, Italian and Dutch Governments to institute a migrant land settlement in Tasmania, the proposal being for the Rural Movement to provide stock from the Primary Produce Gift Scheme, and some cash.

The Australian Government's lack of interest caused the collapse of the scheme, though we had done a great deal of work to bring it about.

Work for land settlement

At this time, also, a Victorian Land Settlement Act was passed, providing for the establishment of ex-servicemen, Australian citizens and migrants on the land in Victoria. The disastrous split in the political field at this time rendered it inoperative, but the work of the Rural Movement had ensured its enactment.

San Isidore, the community settlement near Wagga, was begun in 1954. It encountered great difficulties, but because of the work of Father Duck and those who helped him, it has succeeded.

An agricultural college founded at Cygnet (Tasmania) was a Rural Movement inspiration.

In its own organisational field, the N.C.R.M. instituted in 1953 the system of Regional Councils; this led to greater efficiency in the work of the organisation, one result being a community effort which ensured free transport for Catholic children attending Catholic schools in the country.

In the latter years of the 50s we saw the growth of one of the best schemes the N.C.R.M. has pioneered — the Primary Produce Gift Scheme.

When I left the Rural Movement at the end of 1958, the Scheme had distributed to young men stock and cash to the value of between £8,000 and £10,000; and many owed their start on the land to the help given them through the P.P.G.S.

As with many other things the Rural Movement has done, there was an important aspect of this scheme: The stock and cash were given to Catholics and non-Catholics alike; and, indeed, given by Catholics and non-Catholics.

I could list many other achievements, such as the establishment of the C.C.Y.M. in the Wagga and Port Pirie Dioceses, but time will not allow of this.

There is this important thing I must repeat — the N.C.R.M. has provided policy platforms of great importance to the nation.

In 1956, when there was a great deal of feeling against Japan, we provided a forum for the Department of Trade to outline the Japanese Trade Agreements; in 1956, also, we provided a forum for Professor Titterton to outline his ideas on defence and decentralisation.

A "new look" was given to agriculture when we brought Sir Ian Clunies Ross to a Convention in this hall in 1957; at the same Convention, Dr. George Zubrzycki again outlined the case for migration.

Trade with Red China

We have been prominent in the campaign for restricted trade with China. I would like to emphasise the importance of this particular activity over the years, because it is an extension of the Apostolate of Institutions.

The fight against Communism might find itself in difficulties in the trade union movement; but it could be won there. Yet, even if it is, the whole fight could be lost because of the failure to win the fight in the primary producer organisations.

The nation could fall because of extended trade with Red China, so it is vital that we should continue the work done in the past.

While much of what I have said was going on, the Rural Movement provided leadership training at Belloc House for quite a number of young men, many of whom have become leaders in their communities.

I have listed a number of successes; now I would like to list one failure — decentralisation.

To achieve this we would need to have some political decision made. Until 1954, the N.C.R.M. had some political influence because of our own activities and because of parallel activities in the trade union movement. Because of that, we saw the introduction of the Co-operative Act and a Land Settlement Act in Victoria.

Can implement our policies

With the political upheaval in Victoria in 1954-55, however, there was an isolation of our ideas; now it is my contention that that isolation is tending to diminish, and this is the time when many of our policies needing political decision can be implemented.

To summarise what I have said: The Rural Movement has done many things that can be seen and measured, but, more important perhaps, are many of its achievements which cannot be seen or measured.

The Rural Movement has restored dignity to rural life; it has brought an awareness of Australia's gratuitous position in Asia; it has helped create a public opinion conducive to helping underdeveloped countries. And this is charity on an enormous scale.

Not only has the N.C.R.M. done these things, but it has done them in a particular way because, individually and as an organisation, it has pioneered the idea of co-operation with non-Catholics in these activities — for example, co-operatives and the Primary Produce Gift Scheme.

The N.C.R.M. has produced good leaders, both men and women, who have had an enduring influence for good in christianising institutions.

Most important of all, it has produced good people — people who care what happens to others in their neighbourhood, who care what happens to others in their own nation and in other countries, people who have an abundance of charity and who love their neighbours as themselves.

In the past, love has been the inspiration of all the N.C.R.M. has done to make it great; love will be the inspiration to do in the future those things which will make "the fruits of the vine" even more valuable.

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AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN ASIA

One of the highlights of the Convention was the address given by Professor Sibnarayan Ray at a meeting which was open to the public, and very well attended.

Professor Ray, who is Head of the Department of Indian Studies at Melbourne University, and Professor of English Literature, University of Bombay, stressed the importance of a real understanding by Australia of the problems of Asia, and the need for Australians to do everything, in its own interests, to seek friends among the democratic nations of Asia.

Here are the salient portions of Professor Ray's address:

"The fact that I am neither a Christian nor an Australian has not prevented you from inviting me here to discuss problems common to your country and mine, and because of that I greatly appreciate the invitation.

"Australians I have met do not seem certain of the direction in which this great country is moving.

"Australia's position is unique. By religion and culture it is an extension of Europe; geographically it is a part of Asia.

"The implications of this will become clear in the next decade.

"The situation would not be so serious but for the events of the past 20 years; unfortunately for Australia, the position is not as it was at the beginning of that time. The great European powers which dominated Asia are now gone; they no longer have any influence in this part of the world.

"This underlines Australia's isolation in Asia in the geographical sense; and accompanying the disappearance of European power is the resurgence of Asian power.

"Many Asian countries, because of Western influence, have undergone a revolution which has engendered new forces. And these new forces might one day spill over their national frontiers.

"Australians must have the courage to admit this.

No help from Europe

"There is little hope of Australians receiving help from metropolitan Europe. I, as an Asian, am elated by this prospect; but I believe that, given the wisdom and the leadership, Australia can play a significant part in fostering the democratic way of life in Asia.

"It troubles me 'no end' that many Australians are unaware of the responsibility this country has.

"The situation in Asia today is comparable to that in Europe in the 1930s; Asia today is divided into two parts, as Europe then was.

"The situation in Europe led to war, but Europeans seem to be able to learn the lessons of this.

"However, Asians have been called upon to make rapid economic, social and political changes which took two or three centuries in Europe.

"Some Asian countries have adopted systems which promise rapid material progress, but which submerge individual freedom.

"One such country is China, which has been under Communism for 16 years; and the indications are that, as in Germany, the regime will not be overthrown from within.

"Red China has built up a powerful military machine and has established fifth columns in every Asian country. Again, like Germany, Red China plans to bring the whole area under its influence.

Australia an "anachronism"

"And, with the disappearance of European power from Asia, Communist China regards Australia as an anachronism which cannot be tolerated.

"Asian Communist parties are pro-Peking; one of the tragedies of recent years has been the forcing out of Asia of Russian influence.

"Indonesia, at Australia's front door, has the third largest Communist Party in the world, and this Party is completely oriented towards Peking. The Indonesian Communists are waiting until they take complete control of the country, and this will probably happen within the next three or four years.

"The second force in Asia is the democratic countries. Their governments may, in some cases, be corrupt, but in these countries at least the foundations of freedom are laid.

"The third force is the uncommitted nations such as Burma and Pakistan. In these countries, a rather shamefaced dictatorship has been necessary to save them from Communism.

"Then there are the unfortunate nations such as Laos and South Vietnam.

Unity now in Asia

"Another factor on the Asian scene is the comparatively recent unity in Asian countries, whose peoples not long ago were united in many cases only by a common hatred of Europeans.

"Summing up the implications of all these factors, I must say that I am amazed at how naive some Australians are.

"I have been asked by some Australians what is worth defending in South Vietnam. What is worth defending in South Vietnam is the possibility of a people living under a democratic system.

"I have just returned from South Korea where there are clear signs that a democratic way of life, a better standard of living — things worth fighting for — are being established.

"This would not be possible had South Korea been allowed to go the way of Communist North Korea.

"The situation in Asia is grave, but when the democratic countries of Asia — India, the Philippines, Japan and others — are put side by side with Communist China, the situation is not so bleak.

Clash is inevitable

"But a clash between the two is inevitable, and it is foolish of Australians to think otherwise.

"Australia must distinguish between these forces, and it must seek friends in Asia.

"However, the major political parties in Australia refuse to make this distinction.

"An example of this is the China wheat trade, which allows the Communists to exercise economic blackmail over Australia.

"There are groups in Australia with a vested interest in the continuance of this trade, which could alienate Asian countries which want to be friendly with Australia.

"The abandonment of the White Australia Policy is another means by which Australia can engender goodwill in Asia.

"I do not think there is an Asian who believes that Australia should open its doors to unrestricted migration from Asia, but the policy creates hostility and distrust among Asians.

"As an alternative I suggest a policy such as that which operates in the United States, which accepts Asians when one or more conditions are complied with.

"It is in Australia's own interests to seek friends in Asia. If Australians alienate the free Asian nations, then Australians themselves may one day have to migrate — to Europe or America.

"But, as the Filipino Vice-President has pointed out to me, the future of Asia lies not with the Afro-Asian bloc but with six or seven free countries in Asia.

Can contain Communism

"Japan, India, the Philippines, Australia and other countries can build up a force strong enough to contain Communism.

"Australia, however, has not done much to aid the developing countries of Asia, and will probably not do a great deal more until there is a direct threat to her security.

"To give more assistance to Asian countries will hit Australia where it hurts most — in the pocket. But a threat to Australia's security is likely within the next ten years, from a Communist Indonesia and from a Red China thrusting its finger down through South Vietnam.

"In view of these things, what I find perplexing in Australia is the contradictions in policy towards Asia.

"In India, now, more and more people have found the courage to say that Red China is the enemy, and not Pakistan.

"Increasing numbers of people have the courage to say that India must be prepared to make a generous gesture towards Pakistan in Kashmir to win the friendship of the Pakistanis.

"I am also profoundly disturbed by the influence Communists have in Australian politics.

"I am even more concerned about this in view of the significant role Australia has in the survival and growth of democracy in Asia."

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Reports To The Convention

(1) CHAPLAINS' COMMITTEE

By Rt. Rev. Mgr. J. H. LARKINS, P.P., V.G., P.A.,
the N.C.R.M. National Chaplain.

Meetings of chaplains were held in February and November, 1964, and February and May, 1965, with an average attendance of eight.

At the February, 1964, meeting we were concerned over the difficulty of getting chaplains for groups.

While younger priests would readily act as chaplains for the Y.C.S. or Y.C.W., they felt that they had no knowledge of the N.C.R.M. or its affairs; or they faced the difficulty that they were so taken up with the Y.C.S. or Y.C.W. that they were unable to attend any meetings.

Arrangements were made for the National Chaplain to address students at Werribee and Glen Waverley. I was well received at both places and was plied with many questions.

Just a week ago, I received a request for N.C.R.M. literature from a student at Werribee as a result of last year's talk.

The chaplains recommended that National Executive hold a Convention soon; and if it were to be in Melbourne, a day or half a day should be spent at Rupertswood, Sunbury.

They also recommended that, at all training schools, the senior students in secondary schools should be invited to attend.

At the November meeting, Father Duck reported on his visit to Indonesia.

Arrangements were made for Fathers Pooley and O'Neill to prepare papers for discussion at the next meeting.

At the February, 1965, meeting, both papers were read and useful discussion took place. We also discussed how a possible change from Catholic Action to Action of Catholics would affect the N.C.R.M.

At the May, 1965, meeting, held at Albury, Father Pooley's paper was read again and discussed.

We recommended that training schools should be arranged for priests who would act as chaplains for the N.C.R.M.; we also recommended that the next Convention should concentrate on internal matters of N.C.R.M. work.

The matter of getting chaplains to start groups, or to help existing groups is still a big difficulty.

We need, also, to be able to show to parish priests that the N.C.R.M. would be a help in the parish, and not just another burden involving meetings.

A training school for young priests would fill a real need, and it would be as well also to arrange again this year for talks to the students in the seminaries.

(2) PRIMARY PRODUCE GIFT SCHEME

By P. T. FINDLAY

Now in its ninth year of operation, the Primary Produce Gift Scheme, which has done so much for the N.C.R.M. in the sphere of practical charity, is facing a critical period.

That does not mean that there is any cause for alarm, but it does mean that the solid basis of the Scheme is in danger of being weakened.

In a report published in "Rural Life" in June last year, I pointed out that a drive for more stock was urgent if the Scheme was not to become lopsided with undue emphasis on the Cash Loans Section.

That is as true now as it was then — in fact, the position has become worse over the past twelve months.

Value of stock on hand at June 30 this year is estimated at £250; fewer than half-a-dozen contracts for the sale of stock were made during the year.

Coupled with this is the fact that several contracts were completed during the year, reducing the number current to just over 20.

Everyone conversant with the operation and principles of the Scheme knows that without continuing supplies of stock new contracts are out of the question. This, in turn, leads to the position where the fund from which cash loans are allocated becomes depleted to the point of exhaustion — a state which it has now reached.

Major difficulty

That it is not easy for Regions to obtain donations of stock is apparent from a report from the Axe Creek Group — one of the Groups which have been most active in this way. In that report this comment is made: "We are investigating the possibility of a 'calf drive' for stock for the P.P.G.S. This will not be easy owing to the high value of calves and the fact that a number of organisations are using this as a method to raise funds."

That other organisations are following the lead given by the N.C.R.M. is a matter for pride, but the competition makes the task of keeping the Scheme sound much more difficult.

In spite of that, there is no doubt that with the will to get the stock it can still be got if a real effort is made.

Alternative

Since the establishment of the Scheme, the emphasis has been placed almost completely on dairy stock.

That is understandable because the Scheme originated in the Terang-Camperdown Region where the need was most felt for assistance to settlers in establishing themselves on dairy farms. Its growth in Gippsland and other dairying areas was a logical development.

But, because dairy stock is becoming hard to get, some alternative — or something additional — should be sought.

The P.P.G.S. Central Committee has discussed the possibility of extending the Scheme to flock rams; but the idea has not gone beyond the discussion stage. If anything can be done about it, now is the time to do it.

Administration

The Report and Balance Sheet submitted to the May meeting of the Central Committee included several recommendations from the Accountants. These were adopted — with some minor amendments — by the National Executive.

Copies are in the hands of Regional Councils who, no doubt, have given the decisions close consideration. This consideration is essential because, basically, the direction and control of the Scheme are the business of Regional Councils acting through their delegates to the Central Committee. "Left in the hands of the Secretary" is not good enough.

That was emphasised at a meeting of the Central Committee in February, 1960, when this principle was established:

"The respective Regional Council must maintain close contact with the person to whom the stock is allotted by the Central Committee on the Regional Council recommendation."

That principle applies also to Cash Loans — even more, perhaps, than it does to Contracts of Sale. Sometimes Cash Loans are not adequately supervised, and this results in too many overdue repayments.

The credit side

In spite of the obvious weaknesses at present in the Scheme, it still continues to do what it was intended to do — give assistance on the basis of need to worthy farmers, irrespective of denomination, who are battling to establish themselves.

The extent of the help given can be realised from these figures for contracts and cash loans during the year ended June 30 — £520 and £2,020, respectively.

However, the figures underline what I said earlier about the need for building up stock. Cash loans are an essential part of the Scheme, but when they total almost four times that of sales of stock, it is not hard to see that, failing adequate stock reserves, the sources of cash loans must dry up.

If there is undue emphasis in this report on the business side of the Scheme, it is worth while repeating what was said at the meeting in 1960 when the principles of the scheme were laid down:

"The aim of the Central Committee is, at all times, to combine Charity and Business."

Without "business" we forfeit the opportunity for "charity".

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Scheme was extended this year to the Wagga district, some residents of San Isidore benefiting particularly from it.

(3) THE GENERAL ORGANISER

By PAUL WILD

In the period since the last Convention, many people had held the opinion that the N.C.R.M. was finished . . . That opinion is no longer widely held, for people are beginning to realise that not only has the Rural Movement a future, but also that there is real need to extend its work.

This revision of opinion has coincided with the appointment of organisers, but an important factor was that the N.C.R.M. had sufficient faith in itself to make these appointments.

Again, much of the credit for what has been achieved must go to others; e.g., "The Apostolate of Institutions" and the schools to introduce it had been very largely arranged before I took office.

The Rural Movement is not finished, but the picture in my area is not wholly one of success. Let me, at this stage, list a few of my failures.

Firstly, **Asian Aid**: Only one Group carried out the full campaign as recommended by National Executive. Most seem to regard the task as merely one of raising money to help Asians, rather than an organised attempt to get people interested in Asia, the raising of living standards there, awareness of Australia's position in Asia, and to involve some of these in the work of the Rural Movement.

In several places I contacted people in neighbouring parishes who were prepared to set up committees to co-operate with the nearby N.C.R.M. Group in any scheme which was set up.

Not one Group followed up this work.

Also included in my failures would be the three Groups which did not get past the first meeting, and the three occasions on which I persuaded people to come to a meeting, but was unable to achieve the formation of a Group.

There is a brighter side, of course. Although failures have probably been more numerous than successes, I feel there is no reason for pessimism.

Six new groups

Six new Groups have been formed and are becoming active. Even in the cases where people decided against forming Groups they, at least, understand the Rural Movement a little better and are prepared to give us limited support — in such projects as Asian Aid, for example.

Eleven schools

Eleven schools have been held in country centres.

If the yardstick for measuring their success is attendance, then, on the whole, they were quite successful.

Added to this are such unforeseen — and sometimes unknown — results as the case where a non-Catholic congregation started a discussion group, using the programme "The Apostolate of Institutions". Then there was Father Fahey's radio interview over an Albury station after the school at Lockhart.

Another result of these schools has been that a panel of speakers has been built up. This includes people from Community Aid Abroad, who have been most co-operative and have shown quite an interest in the Rural Movement; Father Wilkins, S.J. (Editor of "Madonna"); and Father Peter Little, S.J., from the Glen Waverley Seminary. These two priests have offered to make tapes for the Tape Library.

Group visits

I have visited each Group once a quarter wherever possible. I feel this is the only way to keep in touch and form any idea of the strength of the Rural Movement. Another advantage of these regular visits is that I have been able to help Groups bring outstanding contracts in the Primary Produce Gift Scheme up to date. I am also able to answer any queries arising from National Executive decisions, and answer any complaints.

Three-day schools

You will notice that all the Schools I have mentioned have been in country areas. While these Regional Schools are most important and must continue, they are no substitute for the three-day schools which used to be held at Belloc House. Young members especially would benefit greatly from such intensive training. If I can persuade enough people to come to Melbourne for three days, or perhaps a week-end, I will arrange schools at Belloc from time to time.

New programme

Most Groups have either finished, or are finishing, the programme "Apostolate of Institutions". A new programme will soon be prepared, and I ask Regional Councils to begin preparations for schools to introduce the programme in the late spring or autumn. I have begun to make arrangements for speakers for these schools.

Primary Industries

Advisory Committee

The formation of the Primary Industries Advisory Committee is perhaps one of the most important developments in recent years.

It has long been recognised that such a committee was needed. At the National Executive meeting in August, 1963, Paul McGowan suggested the

formation of an "advisory panel of leaders in primary producer organisations who could give information to help in forming policy". In my report to National Executive recently I made a similar suggestion.

However, it was the late Chris O'Dwyer who was able to bring the idea to fruition. Unfortunately, Chris was killed in a tractor accident before the committee was formed.

Many of those who knew him will have the opinion that he is now in a more influential position to help than any of us, and that his prayers had a good deal to do with the successful launching of the committee.

Since there will be a separate report for the PIAC, I will merely urge you to support it by your actions and your prayers.

Conclusion

I will not enlarge on such matters as my discussions on Asian Aid with Father Leonard Forster, S.J.; nor on the efforts required to obtain speakers for the school at Balmoral, when Father Peter Little, S.J., and Terry Long (Maryborough Group) adequately filled the bill.

May I conclude by asking for your prayers? During the last 18 months, I have become increasingly aware that only with the help of God can lasting results be obtained. Quite frequently I have been able to do work which was beyond my own capabilities after asking various people, particularly nuns, to pray for its success.

The task of the Rural Movement is so great that it cannot be accomplished without constant prayer to make fruitful the necessary reading, self-education and constant and dedicated effort.

(4) ORGANISING IN THE RIVERINA

By TERRY FROMHOLTZ

To judge properly the effectiveness of any branch of the Social Apostolate, we should examine the activities in the light of the social encyclicals to see whether the principles therein are being adhered to.

I shall not endeavour to go into every detail of the activities of the N.C.R.M. in the Riverina during the past year — they are covered adequately in separate reports which are being circulated. I shall content myself with highlighting a few items portraying the wide variety of work in the N.C.R.M.

Christian leadership

In Part V of Pope John's Encyclical, "Pacem in Terris", we read:

"Once again we deem it opportune to remind Our children of their duty to take an active part in public life, and to contribute towards the common good of the entire human family as well as to that of their own political community.

"They should endeavour, therefore, in the light of the faith and with the strength of love to ensure that the various institutions — whether economic, social, cultural or political in purpose — should be such as not to create obstacles, but rather to facilitate or render less arduous man's perfecting of himself both in the natural order as well as the supernatural."

Wherever there is a Rural Movement group, there you will find the members taking a leading part in vocational organisations such as the United Farmers or the Victorian Wheat and Woolgrowers' Association.

They hold these positions not primarily because they are wheatgrowers with economic interests in wheat policy, but mainly to represent Christian

attitudes in these organisations. In other words, their motive is spiritual, though their work is in the economic field.

For this reason, the training of members is continued at regular group meetings through the Gospel discussion and the study of the social teachings of the Church.

Trade with China

Perhaps the biggest problem facing Australia is our increasing dependence on the China market in both wheat and wool.

Because the Howlong Group realised the danger of the situation, they were determined to do something about it. But what could a group of eight men do to change the policy of the Australian Wheat Board, the Wool Board or the Federal Government?

The task seemed impossible, but they immediately began to look for alternative markets.

It was not long before they came across a report from Mr. John Young, who had spent some time in India studying the economy of that country. He had found that the textile industry of India could not afford the amount of wool required, and so was working below capacity. The remedy suggested by Mr. Young was to give India £5 million credit on the purchase of wool.

The Howlong Group immediately saw that this would have the effect of developing India as a better wool customer, and this would have the added effect of decreasing our dependence on Red China.

The Group then put the idea to the local branch of the United Farmers where it was adopted; but was unfortunately defeated at State conference. However, the policy has now been taken up in Victoria and is gaining wide support.

This is typical of the Rural Movement's approach to problems in primary industries, and the practical and constructive policies are evidence of the members' experience and competence.

As Pope John said in "Pacem in Terris", "one will not be able to enter these organisations and influence them from within unless he is scientifically competent, technically capable and skilled in the practice of his own profession."

Decentralisation

The Rural Movement has always been a champion of decentralisation, and we in the Riverina believe that the best method is to begin with the Government, so we are actively supporting the Riverina New State Movement.

The long fight for a university in the Riverina has been won, and I am pleased to record that many N.C.R.M. members played their part in it.

Asian Aid

In "Mater et Magistra" Pope John reminds us: "We are all equally responsible for the undernourished peoples . . . Therefore, it is necessary to educate one's conscience to the sense of responsibility which weighs upon each and everyone, especially upon those who are more blessed with this world's goods."

In the Riverina we have used two quite different methods of helping the underdeveloped countries.

In the first place, we have raised relatively small sums of money by what we call the "Calf Scheme". We buy a number of calves about six months old, and various members of the Rural Movement, and its supporters, agist them for about a year.

When they are sold we make about £20 a head profit. For example, eleven calves agisted near Wagga last year yielded £220, and we have 70 more being agisted near Wagga, Holbrook and Finley, and most of these will be sold next spring.

The Upper Murray Regional Council has been financing this scheme with the proceeds of a development plan concluded some ten years ago.

I feel that this "Calf Scheme" has been going long enough to be proved, and that we have as yet only scratched the surface. There is ample scope for the expansion of this scheme, which can provide a more ambitious Asian Aid programme.

The organisations we have helped in Asia are in need of more assistance each year.

For example, the £220 raised in the Wagga Region was used to help set up a fishermen's co-operative, which will need continued assistance if it is to flourish.

A totally different approach was made by the South Wagga Group, when they set out to get the people of Wagga to adopt a Sister City in Asia, and to give aid directly to it.

By organising the project on a public basis, every section of the community is brought to co-operate in helping Asia.

The Wagga Sister City idea took over two years to mature and, with the formation of the Temerloh-Wagga Good Neighbour Association, it is now on a very sound footing.

Temerloh is a town in Malaya, and was chosen on the advice of Mr. E. T. Critchley, Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia.

The Mayor of Wagga has corresponded with the President of the Temerloh Town Council, and Mr. Wal Fife, the local member of State Parliament, has visited the town. The first project is helping with a baby health clinic, and the local Press is keeping the idea before the public.

I would commend the Sister City idea to Rural Movement groups as a practical means of aiding Asia on the public level, and suggest that the article in this issue of "Rural Life" be read carefully.

Local work

On the local scene, groups find many opportunities for putting the social teaching of the Church into action; a good example would be the present activity of the recently formed Swan Hill Group.

A brief survey of Swan Hill revealed the difficulty many fruitgrowers were experiencing with the unsatisfactory prices being obtained from the Victorian markets. There were sufficient growers involved for it to have a depressing effect on the whole district, so the Group could not possibly ignore the problem.

Two members of the Group were actively engaged in the industry and provided up-to-date information, while the other members are examining the situation in the light of pertinent sections of "Mater et Magistra".

There is a local study committee considering possible moves such as co-operative marketing or a cannery. The N.C.R.M. is making a contribution through its two members in the fresh fruit industry.

Credit Unions

In the field of Credit Unions, the Wagga South Group, which last year formed the South Wagga Parish Credit Union, was this year instrumental in the formation of a credit union among the postal employees in Wagga, which in turn is co-operating in the formation of a similar credit union in Albury.

The South Wagga and the San Isidore Credit Unions organised the formation of the Riverina Chapter of Credit Unions which includes those

at Finley, Leeton and Albury — formed by the N.C.R.M. about eight years ago.

It is of interest to notice at this stage that the Hume Co-operative Housing Society, which was formed by the N.C.R.M. about ten years ago, has made remarkable progress.

With assets now over £1 million it is providing a much-needed service in the country by way of finance for housing, development and farm purchase. Three N.C.R.M. members are still active members on the Board.

Youth

The Mangoplah Group is making a determined bid to get youth into the N.C.R.M. once more. They have an ambitious plan to establish links between the young people in all parts of the Riverina and Victoria by means of exchange visits.

The plan will naturally strike difficulties, but it deserves support, and we must be training young members if we are to have a future.

Regions and Groups

In the Riverina we have four regions — Upper Murray, Wagga, Berriquin and the Mallee — and ten active groups — Howlong, San Isidore, Holbrook, South Wagga, Mangoplah, Lockhart, Finley, Swan Hill, Manangatang and Annuello.

With a distinct possibility of forming ten more groups this year, we are planning on the Riverina State Executive becoming a reality.

Two N.C.R.M. Retreats were held during the year, one at Yackandandah and one at Mangoplah. Both were well attended.

Hospitality

I cannot conclude without recording my sincere thanks to all those who extend their hospitality to me when I am on the road. I can truly say that I have a home away from home in every part of the Riverina, and I am continually edified by the sound Christian family life of our Rural Movement members.

(5) THIRTY FAMILIES NOW AT SAN ISIDORE

The end of June, 1965, saw 30 family units settled on their homestead blocks at San Isidore; and, over the period from June, 1964, welcomes were given to five families.

These were the Hans Schonenberg, John Hay, Peter Gooden, Pat Hogan and John Trevaskis families.

At least three new homes are to be built during the next year and a new section of subdivision is to be opened when road formation will give access to ten new blocks. Recent inquiries indicate that these will be taken up soon. They are of approximately five acres and are on the filtered water, electricity and telephone lines.

All public services are now available, and daily delivery of bread, papers, groceries, etc. make most of the conveniences of town living a part of the life of the settlers.

Land that is not opened for subdivision has been carefully cropped and pastured by an efficient share-farmer, and this has enabled the Board of Directors to meet all shire rates, water rates and improvements on all the common land, as well as slowly reducing the overdraft so that the price of homestead blocks is kept below actual cost.

However, it is difficult to hold down cost of road works, and the selling price of these blocks is getting nearer to £1,000

Co-operative Building Society

The San Isidore Co-operative Building Society has been able to make available loans comparable to any other societies for all settlers who did not have alternative finance, and this is still available.

All the men have been easily able to find suitable employment in Wagga and the surrounding district, and a few grown-up children are also at work.

The total number of souls now exceeds 170, of whom 70 are children either at the primary school at the settlement or at Catholic schools in Wagga.

Mrs. Fromholtz runs the school bus service and most of the fare is covered by State subsidy.

The Provisional school at the settlement now has 40 children, and a second teacher will soon be needed to assist Mr. Hayes, who at present teaches all classes.

Spiritual needs

The Motor Mission Sisters from Mt. Erin Convent attend four days each week for religious classes. Spiritual needs have been attended to from the Bishop's House priests at St. Michael's Cathedral during the absence of Rev. Father Duck on other duties. Apart from Sundays, Mass has been celebrated at the San Isidore chapel on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday, and also on First Friday.

Early settlers were prepared for the greater participation in the Liturgy by the fact that daily dialogue Mass was the custom over nearly ten years.

Bishop Henschke is continuing his inquiries to have an order of contemplative nuns, such as the Carmelites, to make a foundation at San Isidore.

In the meantime, the building of a permanent church has been delayed; and the small temporary chapel has been slightly altered to make more seating available.

Meetings discuss common problems

Settlers have monthly meetings throughout the year to deal with common problems of the settlement.

The Rural Movement holds a monthly meeting; mothers have been holding a meeting each month in their own "Madonna Group", and this has resulted in much interesting sharing of ideas, as well as some fruitful efforts of assistance to missions for Australian aborigines and an African diocese.

Many settlers hold positions of importance in associations in Wagga of vocational, social, religious and political interests.

The Altar Society continued to care for the needs of the chapel; the girls have formed a strong branch of the Children of Mary.

Credit Union flourishing

The San Isidore Credit Union has flourished through the efforts of Brian Junck, assisted by a good Board and by the honorary assistant accountant, Mr. Smith. Most adults and many of the children are saving regularly with the credit union.

There is a constant demand for small loans, and general meetings have been held frequently during the year for educational purposes — to give the members the opportunity to learn more about their own financial institution.

Through the example and inspiration of this credit union, three others have been set up: in South Wagga parish, among the postal workers at Wagga and in the Post Office at Albury.

Many other activities

The annual San Isidore gymkhana was held in May to assist the funds of the Loreto Home of Compassion, Wagga. Even if not the best ever, it was most successful.

San Isidore Post Office is now officially established under the care of the Black family, and 14 homes are now on the automatic telephone.

Tennis courts are now completed after many laborious working-bees; the recreation reserve is at present being cultivated and sown with pasture grasses. Many trees have been planted on this reserve.

Another thousand Canary Island pines are to be planted in the forest reserve — donated by Bishop Henschke. Due to damage by fire and drought, many of these will be to replace earlier plantings of more than six thousand.

In a few years these, together with many street trees and homestead fruit trees, will change and beautify the appearance of the whole settlement.

For better family life

The development of the ideals of our social belief — the right of the individual man to a decent home and a little land of his own, and some degree of independence for each family — has been steadily going forward.

Religious life, in conditions of moderate economic and social independence and the desire to work for the welfare of one's neighbour, is taking shape at San Isidore.

Under the chairmanship of Bishop Henschke, and with the loyalty of the generous members of the Board of Directors, meetings have been held quarterly at the Bishop's office.

The transfer of Mr. John Parry through his employment has brought Mr. John Kennedy into the position of secretary-treasurer, and a new member to the board in the person of Mr. Peter Gooden.

A few steps nearer to the goal of solid development have been taken during the year and the next year is eagerly looked to, when the lessons of the past will be further followed.

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WHAT IS THE WAGGA "SISTER CITY" SCHEME?

N.C.R.M. Riverina Organiser, Terry Fromholtz, recently talked to Jim McLeod, the secretary of the newly formed Temerloh-Wagga Good Neighbour Association. Jim, a resident of San Isidore for seven years, and the father of eight children, is a testing operator with the N.S.W. Department of Main Roads.

Fromholtz: What is the Temerloh-Wagga Good Neighbour Association?

McLeod: It is an official City of Wagga organisation, formed at a public meeting held in the Council Chambers on May 5th, 1965, and chaired by the Mayor of Wagga, Alderman I. J. Jack. The meeting was attended by 100 people, representing all sections of the community, both civil and religious. They decided to accept the proposal that Wagga should affiliate with the town of Temerloh in Malaya.

F.: How did this idea originate?

M.: As a result of letters and articles in the Wagga Daily Advertiser a small group of people got together and formed themselves into an interim committee. A few informal meetings were held, and the committee settled on the idea of adopting a town in South East Asia for the purpose of giving technical help. One of the committee members, Mrs. O'Brien, arranged to have Mr. David Scott visit Wagga and address a public meeting outlining the aims of his organisation, Community Aid Abroad.

F.: What were the results of this meeting?

M.: The meeting was chaired by the Mayor and attended by the local member of the State Parliament, Mr. Wal Fife, M.L.A. From this point they were solidly behind the scheme. Mr. Scott said that our Sister City scheme had a great deal of merit and had every chance of success. The sixty people present showed a lot of enthusiasm. Plans were made for a public meeting to launch the organisation and the interim committee was delegated to draw up a constitution.

Organising the inaugural meeting

F.: Your inaugural meeting was evidently an outstanding success. On what basis did you organise it?

M.: Invitations were sent out to every organisation we thought might be interested — City and Shire councils, all churches and their associated bodies, civic bodies, service clubs, youth groups, the Army and Air Force bases, the Agricultural College and Research Institute, Teachers' College, nurses' home and the various clubs. As well, the scheme was kept well before the public by the local paper, the Editor himself being keenly interested.

F.: Office bearers were elected at this original meeting?

M.: Yes. The interim committee was replaced by the first elected committee, and I was very happy with the response from leading figures in the city.

F.: Who were some of those elected?

M.: The patrons are the Mayor of Wagga and the President of the Temerloh Town Council; the president is Dr. Jim Syme of the Wagga Agricultural Research Institute; vice-presidents are Alan Taylor, also of the Research Institute, and Alan Burgman, an advertising consultant.

As you know, I am the secretary; the treasurer is Mr. Peter Veerhuis, an accountant, and the assistant secretary is Mrs. Sutherland, wife of the deputy principal of the Wagga Agricultural College.

Mr. Brian Shepherd, a journalist with the Daily Advertiser, is public relations officer, and other committee members are Mrs. B. Daley, principal of the Wagga Commercial College; Mr. Roy O'Halloran, an architect, and Dr. R. J. Lewis, M.D.

How Temerloh was selected

F.: What prompted the interim committee to decide on adopting a town in Malaya?

M.: It happened that the sister of the Australian High Commissioner in Malaysia lives in Wagga, and when approaches were made he recommended Temerloh.

F.: What contacts have been made with Temerloh at this stage?

M.: Mr. Wal Fife, M.L.A., on a recent overseas trip, called at Temerloh and was able to ascertain that immediate help was needed with the Baby Health Centre.

It should be realised that it is not usual to have doctors assisting at births (this is done by midwives) and the one trained sister at the Baby Health Centre has seven assistants and visits the seven sub-clinics in the district. What is needed is a reliable 4-wheel drive vehicle to assist the sister in these visits. As well, the sister expressed the desire for a set of life-sized baby dolls with clothing to help her in the training of expectant mothers in the proper care of children.

F.: What other types of assistance do you have in mind?

M.: Originally we planned on helping in three spheres — medical, education and agriculture, based on the three centres of learning in Wagga — the Nurses' Training Centre, the Agricultural College and Research Institute, and the Teachers' and Technical Colleges. One of our aims is eventually to send qualified people to Temerloh to help with their development plans and work with the people there.

F.: The schemes obviously will cost money. No doubt, the next thing to consider is how to get the money?

Schemes for raising money

M.: Three schemes have been considered and we may decide on using all three. The first scheme is for clubs and organisations in Wagga to take up their own project separately within our Association — for example, an organisation the size of the League Club could take up the task of providing a four-wheel-drive vehicle. This scheme has the advantage of exploiting the natural rivalry that exists between clubs.

F.: This idea has great possibilities. What of the second method?

M.: Another suggestion is to hold a Temerloh Week in which displays could be arranged in shops, coupled with publicity from the local press, radio and TV. This, of course, could be followed by a special drive for funds.

F.: And the third method of raising money?

M.: This idea is quite different. It envisages weekly contributions of a small amount through a person's place of employment. It would take quite a bit of organising, but would result in quite a sum over 12 months.

F.: Do you have any specific project in mind apart from the Baby Health Centre?

M.: What is needed is a survey of the district by some competent authority in Malaya. Of course, it would have to fit in with the Temerloh Town Council's development scheme.

F.: What is being done by your Association to publicise the project?

M.: Recently I was invited to speak at Rotary and Rotarians showed great interest in the scheme. As well, the local paper reports any developments.

F.: Do you think other towns will take up this idea of adopting a town in Asia?

M.: We are doing our best to spread the idea, and we are more than willing to give any assistance we can to other towns wishing to take up the idea.



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